

Sonny Greer
Jack Kleinsinger presents

In association
with NYU Program Board

HIGHLIGHTS
IN *Buddy Terry*
alto, Tenor & Flute **JAZZ**

Thursday, November 8

8:00PM

The Duke Ellington Alumni

Harold Ashby

Sonny Greer

Norris Turney

Francis Williams

Britt Woodman

and other great stars

Joan Marner
under the direction of Aaron Bell

SPECIAL GUEST
Joya Sherrill *alt. tenor*

N.Y.U. Loeb Student Center

Tickets at box office or by mail order to:

Tickets \$6, Students \$5
Student Balcony \$4

566 LaGuardia Pl. at Wash. Sq. So.

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Jazz: 'Highlights' and Ellingtonia

By JOHN S. WILSON

There was a good representation of former Ellingtonians at the "Highlights in Jazz" concert on Thursday evening at the Loeb Student Center called "The Duke Ellington Alumni." But, as chance would have it, two of the three most interesting performers were musicians who had no relationship to Mr. Ellington.

One was Junior Mance, the pianist, who was there primarily to serve as accompanist to Joya Sherrill, an Ellington singer of the 1940's. But he was also presented as a soloist — the "surprise guest" introduced at each of these concerts. And quite a surprise he was. Not so much for his first number, an Ellington variant on the blues, "Rocks in My Bed," for Mr. Mance is noted as an imaginative and creative blues pianist and, as was to be expected, he delivered it with a commanding flair. But his second selection — a ferociously driving treatment of "Main Stem," sustained and developed at a dizzying tempo, chorus after chorus, with Aaron Bell's bass storming along beside him — was the kind of electrifying performance that is chalked up permanently in the memories of everyone who heard it. A performance that is looked back on in wonder as the years go by.

Another high point was provided by Diane Little, a young singer who is a student of Mr. Bell, who was musical director of the program. Miss Little sang a pair of songs by Mr. Bell with an unaffected, swinging intensity that had

the compelling qualities of early Melba Moore, when she was in "Purlie." Mr. Ellington would undoubtedly have approved.

And there was Britt Woodman, one of the greatest of the Ellington trombonists, who has recently returned to New York from a long residence on the West Coast. His technique seems to have grown even from his Ellington days as he slipped gracefully through the trombone specialty, "Sultry Serenade," and added subtle nuances to the traditional trio "Mood Indigo."

The ensemble led by Mr. Bell, which also included old Ellingtonian Norris Turney, Francis Williams and, briefly, Sonny Greer, played with authority during the first half of the concert, but later had some rough moments with "Rockin' in Rhythm" and "In a Mellowtone."



COMING UP

A group of musicians calling themselves the Duke Ellington Alumni will play at the "Highlights in Jazz" series at NYU's Loeb Student Center Nov. 8. Joya Sherrill will sing with former Ellingtonians Harold Ashby, Norris Turney, Sonny Greer, Britt Woodman and Francis Williams under Aaron Bell's direction. A "surprise" guest is also promised.

VOICE NOVEMBER 12, 1979

OUR MUSIC CRITICS GIVE US THE WORD

VOICE CHOICES

HIGHLIGHTS IN JAZZ

A strange assortment of Ellingtonians—including the oldest of them all (older than Duke), Sonny Greer, some of the newest, Norris Turney and Harold Ashby, and some in between, like Francis Williams and the excellent trombonist Britt Woodman. Bassist Aaron Bell is in charge, so it should swing nicely. Nov. 8 at 8, 566 LaGuardia Pl. (Giddins)

Loeb Student Center

598-3757

VOICE NOVEMBER 5, 1979

Jack Kleinsinger presents HIGHLIGHTS IN JAZZ

Thursday, November 8 8:00PM

The Duke Ellington Alumni

Harold Ashby • Sonny Greer
Norris Turney

Francis Williams Britt Woodman
and other great stars
under the direction of Aaron Bell

SPECIAL GUEST Joya Sherrill

NYU Loeb Student Center 566 LaGuardia Pl. at Washington Sq. So.
Tickets \$6.00, Students \$5.00, Student Balcony \$4.00 Tel: 598-3757

VARIETY

Wednesday, October 24, 1979

On The Upbeat

... "The Duke Ellington Alumni" is the subject of Jack Kleinsinger's "Highlights in Jazz" program, Nov. 8, at the Loeb Student Center, New York U. Participants include Harold Ashby, Norris Turney, Francis Williams, Britt Woodman and Sonny Greer, Aaron Bell directing. Joya Sherrill is special guest.

The Soho Weekly News November 8, 1979

MUSIC PICKS

Duke Ellington Alumni

NYU Loeb Student Center Thurs.

Dizzy Gillespie & Jabbo Smith

Village Gate Fri., Sun.

Anyone who played with Duke is A-OK, and this time around you get Harold Ashby, Norris Turney, Sonny Greer, Joya Sherrill and more. Meanwhile, the always-outrageous Diz will trade blows (sorry about the pun) with lusty N'Orleans trumpeter Jabbo.

MS

That old gang o' Duke's back

By RICHARD M. SUDHALTER

EARLY IN his career, Norris Turney confided to a friend that there were really only two music business jobs he coveted — those of Johnny Hodges and Marshall Royal.

Anyone with even a dash of jazz knowledge will have gathered two things from that: that Turney plays alto saxophone and that he was talking about sitting in the lead alto chair of either Duke Ellington's orchestra or Count Basie's.

Fate — and talent — realized the first of those wishes. Tonight at 8 p.m., in NYU Loeb Student Center audito-

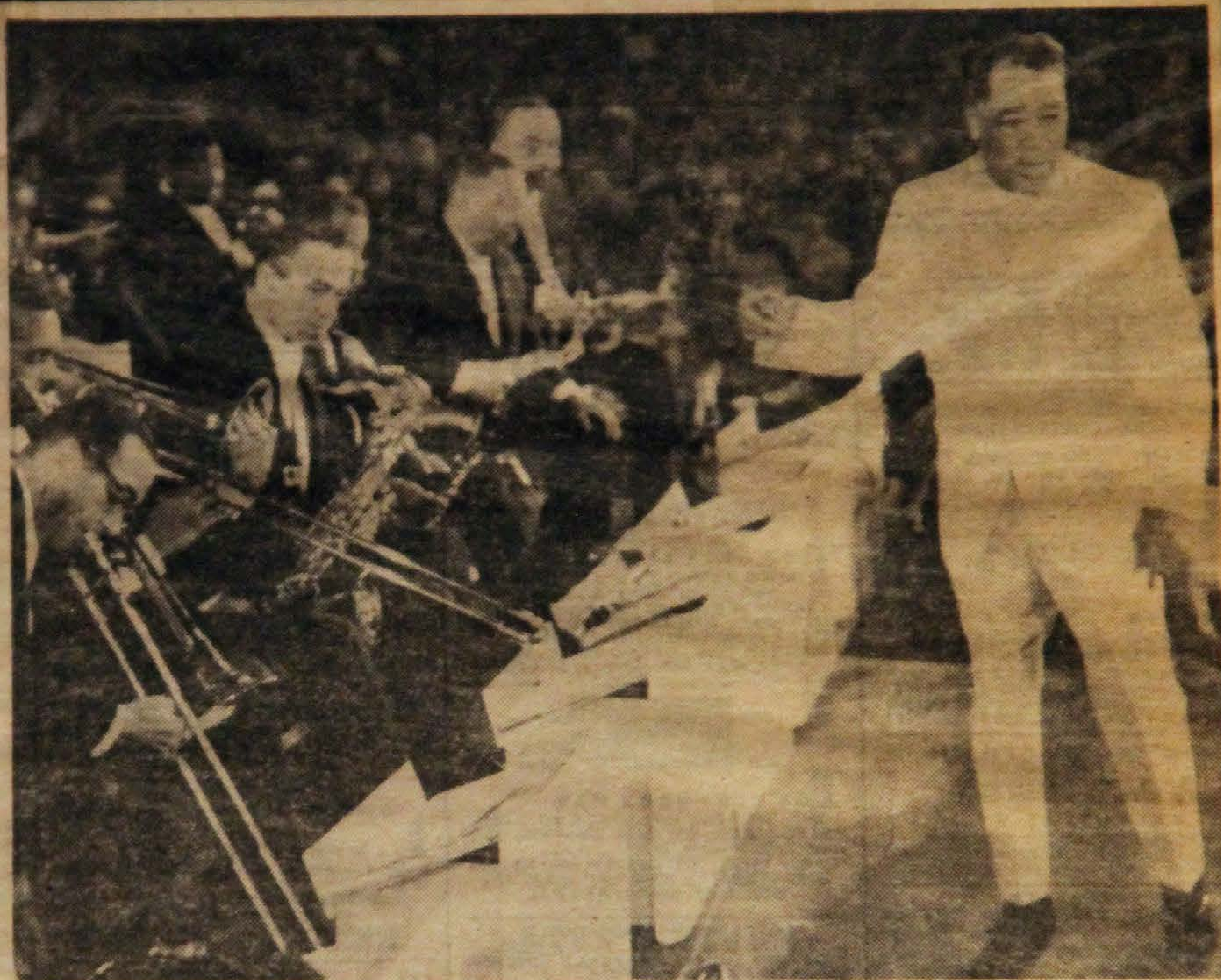
rium, he will be one of several distinguished jazzmen on hand to celebrate their association with Duke Ellington.

It's one of Jack Kleinsinger's continuing *Highlights in Jazz* — and this one, given the special camaraderie which binds together Ellington alumni of six decades, ought to live up to its name.

"For me, Duke's band was the best there was," said Turney, now respected as a highly individual soloist in the Hodges tradition. "And playing next to Johnny, before he died, brought me back to my earliest love in music.

"After he died, when Duke decided to record my tune, *The Checkered*

Continued on Page 38



Duke Ellington leads concert at Cathedral of St. John the Divine in this 1968 photo. Paul Gonsalves is holding saxophone; Johnny Hodges second from right and Russell Procope, far right.

Duke's old gang's together again

Continued from Page 35

Hat, which I'd written for Johnny — but with me featured — I was honored, and determined to do well by him and by Johnny."

He did, and with the same loyalty as that still expressed by another of tonight's featured Ellingtonians, tenor saxophonist Harold Ashby. His idol in the band was tenorist Ben Webster, whose stay lasted from 1940-43.

"I was born in Kansas City," he said this week. "That's where I first met Ben — and when I came to New York, and was living at the St. Francis Hotel on 47th St., he got me to move out to the Island, where he was staying."

"I always loved his sound and the way he played ballads. When I joined the band, all those guys who had been in with him — Hodges, Harry Carney, Cootie, Lawrence Brown — they just welcomed me."

"They were real gentlemen. I'd never been in a big band before. I'd been playing around Chicago with a lot of blues guys. Now all of a sudden there I was in Duke's sax section,

sitting between Hodges and Paul Gonsalves. You can't know what a feeling that was."

It was much like that of trombonist Britt Woodman, the night the Ellington orchestra and Paul Gonsalves on tenor turned the Newport Jazz Festival into one great fireworks display with a marathon *Crescendo* and *Diminuendo in Blue*.

"We all got totally engrossed. Carried away — with Duke yelling for Paul to 'take one more! Take another one!' And the crowd going wild."

After a long sojourn in California, Woodman has been back in New York for some months, building an enviable reputation as a jazzman of agility and unflagging warmth.

"I think we trombones at that time — Quentin (Butter) Jackson, John Sanders and I — got along better than any other section. No hassles. You know, we were the first ones on the stand every night."

"During the intermissions, we'd get right back up there ready to blow. Why? Just a feeling we had about being in that

band, and about Duke personally. He had ways of getting the best out of each of us."

Sometimes they were unconventional ways, said singer Joya Sherrill, with the band for three hitches between 1942-46. "Believe it or not, Duke would even call on you to do something you didn't really feel equipped to do."

"In between sets he'd say, 'come over here and listen to this,' and he'd play some little ditty he'd made up, even singing the words. Then he'd have me try it, and I'd say, 'Yeah, that's cute,' and then forget about it."

"Next night on the stand he'd start playing it and say — I swear to you — 'Come on, Joya, come on and sing it.' And you know I would — and somehow get through it, although I never knew how or why."

So tonight all these people — Turney, Ashby, Woodman, Joya, plus trumpeter Franc Williams and a host of others under

the direction of bassist Aaron Bell, will be paying their homage to the man who set it all in motion, whose spirit lives on in his music.

Just how vividly it lives is perhaps summed up in Aaron Bell's recollection of the time during the '60s when his father died suddenly and he had to take a brief leave from the band to attend the funeral.

"When I got back — it was somewhere like Sedalia, Missouri — I was feeling way down," he said. "When I walked on the stand they had my bass out. I started tuning up."

"Duke just got up from the piano, walked over to me, put his arm around me and said, 'Don't worry — as long as I'm living, you'll have a father.' He made good on that, too."

Nothing more, really to say, besides noting that the concert will feature both standards and little-known bits of Ellingtonia. It should be a feast.

Highlights In Jazz

A concert featuring alumni musicians from the Duke Ellington Orchestra will be held on November 8, at 8 p.m. at New York University Loeb Student Center, 566 LaGuardia Place at Washington Square South, when Jack Kleinsinger's "Highlights in Jazz" presents "The Duke Ellington Alumni."

Musicians who will be participating in the program are Harold Ashby, Norris Turney, Francis Williams, Britt Woodman, and Sonny Greer, under the direction of Aaron Bell. Special guest will be Joya Sherrill who sang with the Ellington orchestra as a teenager in the forties.

For more information call, 598-3757.

NEW YORK VOICE, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1979

Cash Box/November 3, 1979

ON JAZZ

THE NAME'S THE SAME — If you think the Muppet Show's musicians got their names as figments of the imagination of creator **Jim Hensen**, dig this. A sparkling quintet played Fat Tuesday's in N.Y. recently led by saxophonist **John Haley "Zoot" Sims**. The pianist was **Jimmie "Lizard" Rowles**. Major **"Mule" Holley** was on bass and the drummer was **Elmer "Mousey" Alexander**. . . Sim's sax alter-ego, **Al Cohn**, enjoyed the final game of the World Series between sets at the opening of Jazzmania Down, the street-level tavern adjacent to Jazzmania's penthouse. Cohn, a stone Brooklyn Dodger fan of yore, once wrote a tune for the **Eliot Lawrence** band called "Good Wood." "It's what announcer **Red Barber** used to say when someone got a hit," Cohn explained. Meanwhile, Jazzmania audiences are now enjoying jazz in two venues, up 'n' down. . . Both Cohn and Sims will be making their annual appearances at the Heavenly Jazz series held at the Church of the Heavenly Rest. Cohn will back up singer **Joe Williams** on Nov. 16, and Sims will appear with his own group Feb. 8. . . Jack Kleinsinger's "Highlights In Jazz" will be presenting a group of Duke Ellington alumni at New York University's Loeb Center.]



Britt Woodman, trombone; Norris Turney, alto sax; Harold Ashby, tenor sax



Joya Sherrill

photo by James McAfee Jr.

photo by James McAfee Jr.

Duke Ellington Alumni at NYU

by James McAfee Jr.

November 8 at New York University's Loeb Student Center, Jack Kleinsinger's Highlights in Jazz presented in concert The Duke Ellington Alumni, under the direction of Aaron Bell. The alumni consisted of Norris Turney alto sax; Harold Ashby, tenor sax; Francis Williams, trumpet; Britt Woodman, trombone; Al Lucas, bass; Sonny Greer, drums; Joya Sherrill, vocals, and Aaron Bell, piano and bass. The non-Ellingtonians were Buddy Terry, alto and tenor saxes and flute, and Connie Kay, drums.

The music was all from the Ellington book with the exception of two tunes

written by Aaron Bell and sung by one of his students, Diane Little, from Essex County College in New Jersey.

The eight man unit played, with Connie Kay at the drums, such tunes as "Take the A Train," "It Don't Mean A Thing," "Prelude to a Kiss" (which Joya Sherrill also sang), "In a Mellow Tone," "Caravan" and "Things Ain't What They Used To Be."

The surprise guest (they always have a surprise guest at these Highlight Concerts) pianist Junior Mance, in a trio format, Aaron Bell on bass and Connie Kay on drums, played "Rocks In My Bed" and "Main Stem."

Aaron Bell's nephew sang "Sophisticated Lady." He and Diane Little were added guests.

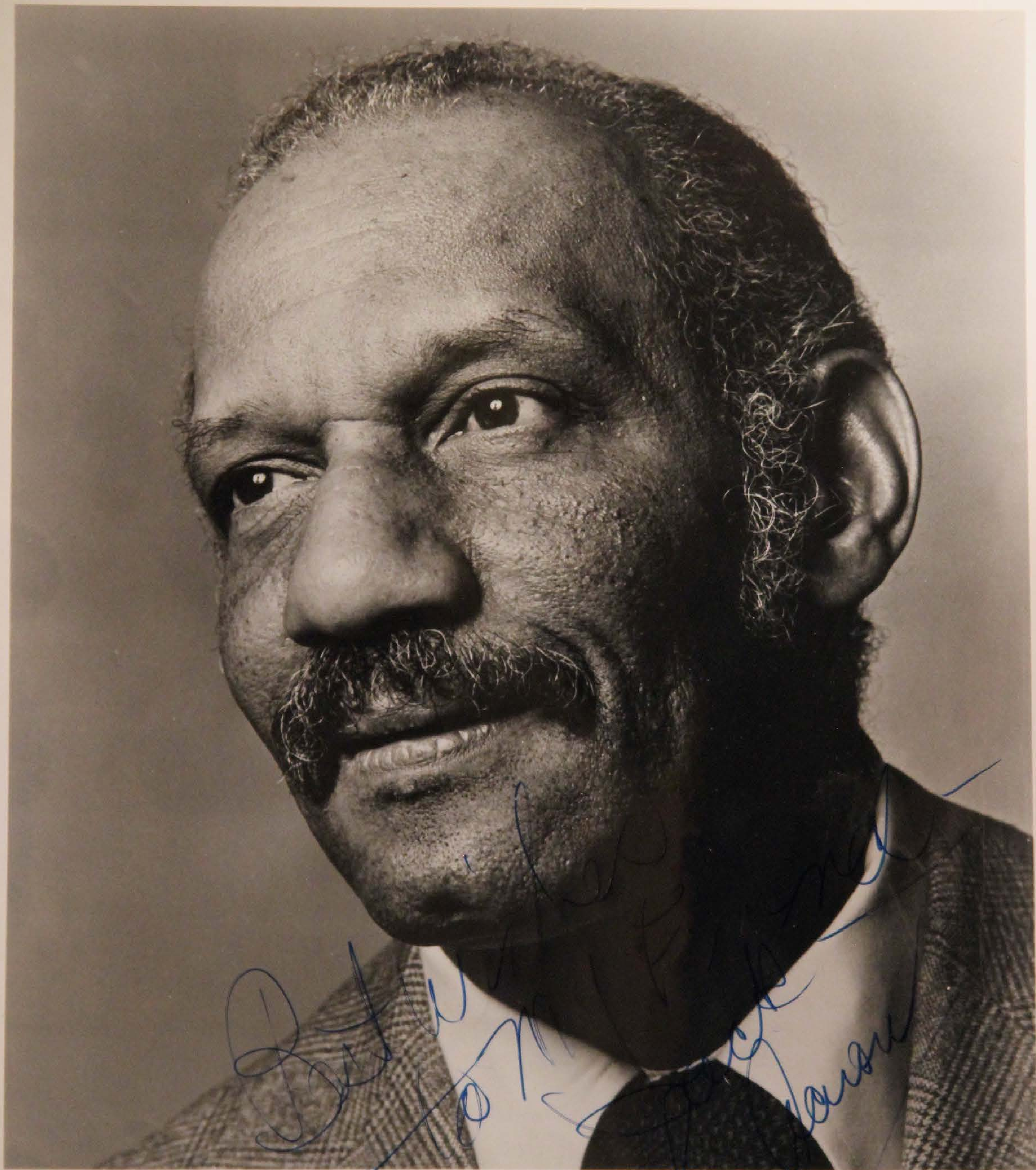
Sonny Greer made only brief appearances and performed on "In a Mellow Tone," "Perdido" and "Things Ain't What They Used To Be."

Joya Sherrill, accompanied by the trio of Junior Mance, Aaron Bell and Connie Kay, sang before and after intermission. The first set included "Prelude to a Kiss," "I'm Beginning To See the Light," "Lush Life" and "Duke's Place." After intermission her selections included "I'm Just a Lucky So and So," "A Flower Is A Lovesome Thing," "Squeeze Me," and on the finale "Things Ain't What They Used To Be." "Love You Madly" as a musical statement to Duke's favorite saying concluded the evening.



To
Jack
All the best
Norris Turney

NORRIS TURNEY





JOYA SHERRILL

Jazz Journal

VOLUME 33 NO.3

International
MARCH 1980 60p

STATESIDE SCENE ~ *East Coast*



Ellington

Jack Kleinsinger's 'Highlights in Jazz' presented a salute to Ellington that was at times sparkling and at times numbingly boring. It was sparkling when Junior Mance played *Main Stem* at a dizzying pace. It was sparkling when Britt Woodman slid through *Sultry Serenade*. It was sparkling when Harold Ashby (with enough breath to float a small dirigible) did *I Got It Bad*. It was also sparkling when Norris Turney played a clean, glissless *Prelude To A Kiss* and when Frank Williams growled, bubbled and snapped through *It Don't Mean A Thing*.

The show was boring when Aaron Bell (musical director and on piano most of the night) gave his friend Buddy Terry (a good, competent reed man without too much heart or soul) his fifty third solo of the night. It was boring when Joya Sherrill sang her fifth number (Joya is in key and in time and that's about it for these ears).

There was also one delightful spot in the program and that was when Connie Kay handed over the drum sticks to none other than Sonny Greer. Sonny was grinning and mugging and not doing too much playing, but just seeing that 84 year old face, which has been preserved so finely, behind a set of drums is one of the most wonderful, joyful things I can imagine.

